

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – AUGUST 21, 2002

Chairman Tim Lambert called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Approval for Minutes from July 2002 Meeting

- July meeting minutes approved with correction.
 - 1) Commissioner Adams had a few changes:
 - (a) The first change was to add motion was adopted on page 3 section 2 (b) under Motion.
 - (b) The second change was to clarify the point regarding the appropriateness of accepting the gratis pass on page 5 section 2 under State Forest and Park Service Update. He was concerned about the criticism that the Commission may receive from the public regarding this type of treatment.
 - 2) Chairman Adams mentioned that the Commission did not vote on whether the Wildlife Advisory Commission (WAC) minutes would be added to the DNR Website on page 2 section 6 (b).
 - (a) Chairman Lambert confirmed that no decision was made.
 - (b) Chairman Lambert moved the discussion regarding adding the Wildlife Advisory Commission minutes to the DNR Website to Old Business.

Chesapeake Forest Lands Update

- Presentation by Steve Koehn, Director of Forest Service
- Provided the Commission a booklet entitled “Overview of the Chesapeake Forest Project”
- Background on the Chesapeake Forest Project [Attachment A]
 - 1) As a result of Senate Bill 599, the Department received the task of opening significant portions of the Chesapeake Forest Lands (CFL) for public hunting by the 2005-2006 hunting season.
 - 2) Currently, the Department is the owner of 58,000 acres of land, which includes the gifted portion (29,000 acres) from the Conservation Fund along with the Richard King Mellon Foundation.
- Management of the Chesapeake Forest Lands
 - 1) The Department is in the process of building and creating a sustainable forest plan and national plan on the entire acreage.
 - 2) Managed by a third party private contractor, Vision Forestry, Inc., which is a consulting firm.
 - (a) Vision Forestry, Inc. will manage the 29,000 gifted portions of the lands.
 - (b) Joint effort during a transitional period for about 3 years, then DNR has the option to manage the Chesapeake Forest Lands alone or renew the Vision Forestry contract.
- General Characterizations
 - 1) The Chesapeake Forest Lands have 460 original tracts in 238 contiguous parcels.
 - 2) The least of the acreage is Caroline County with 1,254.
 - 3) The greatest of the acreage is Somerset County with 17,282.
- Goals of the Chesapeake Forest Lands
 - 1) To support local and natural resources-based economies.
 - 2) To restore or enhance water quality.
 - 3) To continue to provide outdoor recreation opportunities.
 - 4) To preserve the hunting traditions and culture of the Eastern Shore of Maryland.
- The Reasons Why the Department Acquired the Chesapeake Forest Lands
 - 1) This is a tremendous opportunity for DNR.
 - 2) To ensure a place for growing trees, clear water, and wildlife habitat.
- Senate Bill 599
 - 1) Primarily for the purpose of increasing the hunting license fees.
 - 2) The Legislative intent for the Department is to make half the acreage (29,000 acres) of the Chesapeake Forest Lands open to the public by the 2005-2006 hunting season.
 - 3) Delegate Schisler’s Amendment was not intended for the hunting clubs to lose any of their leases.
 - (a) Leases renewed with a 3-year lease or Right-of Entry (ROE) Agreement.
 - (b) We need time to prepare the 29,000 acres for the public use; unfortunately, we do not have the staff to open the 29,000 acres in a year.

- When the Department acquired the Chesapeake Forest Lands, the majority was under a hunting lease agreement.
 - 1) We are reviewing methods of opening the lands.
 - 2) Legislation has given the Department guidelines and time lines.
- Criteria For Assessing Suitability of Tracts For Public Use [Attachment B]
 - 1) The List for the Criteria:
 - (a) Proximity to other DNR lands
 - (b) Size of the complex
 - (c) Access into the complex
 - (d) Water access
 - (e) Readiness for public use
 - (f) Opportunities for public use
 - (g) Location
 - (h) Minimize impact to existing hunt club ROE's
 - 2) Wildlife and Heritage Service and Forest Service recommended opening eight tracts with about 2,300 acres to Secretary Fox.
- Questions and Answers
 - 1) Commissioner Adams asked for the amount of acreage that is under lease agreements. Practically, all of the Chesapeake Forest Lands are under lease agreements, except for the 2,300 acres (not in good standing).
 - 2) Chairman Lambert asked if the Department has any other lands besides the Chesapeake Forest Lands that the Department leases out. No, we do have a couple of demonstration lands. The management of forest lands are strictly a self-sustained process, such as timber and hunting leases.
 - 3) Commissioner Freeland asked are the leases generic in the amount the hunting clubs pay per acreage. Not necessarily, some have better hunting opportunities than others. The estimated average of the cost per acre is \$5.00 to \$6.00; some go up to \$8.00.
 - 4) Commissioner Freeland asked what would prevent the public from entering a lease property. Basically, the Right-of-Entry Agreement allows for all types of hunting opportunities. No section of the law prohibits an individual from entering the property (no longer private property). The CFL is not defined in the Annotated Code of Maryland or COMAR. It is not covered under Wildlife Management Areas, State Parks, or other designations.
 - (a) Right-of Entry Agreement prevents DNR from raising the fees.
 - (b) Chairman Lambert foresees future problems.
 - (c) DNR encourages multi-use for all DNR lands.
 - (i) We are seeking input from the public.
 - (ii) We are having internal discussion to help develop policy.
 - (d) We do have a Citizens Advisory Committee for the CFL.
 - (i) To help DNR to prepare for model plan.
 - (ii) To provide suggestions on how DNR should proceed.
 - (iii) Their input will be incorporated into the decision process.
 - 5) Commissioner Jones encourages the need for wildlife on DNR tracts and adds wildlife management to DNR Criteria. All tracts will have some level of wildlife.
 - (a) We can incorporate wildlife management issues into the criteria document.
 - (b) The Department never had an acquisition of this size.
 - (c) Hopefully, timber will be the driving force economically.
 - (d) A lot of deference to be given to Forest Interior Dwelling Bird Species (FIDS) and Rare, Threatened, and Endangered (RTE) Species in the conservation issues.
 - (e) We will take these things under advisement and move forward.
- The Nature of these Lands
 - 1) Historically, the goal of the timber companies was to have the hunting clubs.
 - 2) The prices are based on the market and opportunities.
 - 3) The hunting leases covered tax-base for lands.
 - 4) The Department has the responsibility to share revenue with local jurisdiction; at tax minimum or 15% of timber, whichever is greater.
 - (a) The last thing the Department wants to do is award these leases to the highest bidder.
 - (b) Discussion ensued regarding smaller tracts.

- (i) One of the things to consider was the relationship the neighbors have with the hunting clubs.
 - (ii) We held several public meetings across the State with 800 to 900 in attendance.
 - (iii) Commissioner Lamp added that the Department has two different constituencies:
 - a. Hunting clubs
 - b. Hunters who want an opportunity to be on this land.
- Meet Resource Management Goals
 - 1) We will look hard at the opportunities with low impact uses of these lands.
 - 2) The Commission will receive an update as this revolves. Also, remember that the hunting clubs have access to the property; however, they do not have exclusive usage.
 - 3) Maryland Sportsmen Association supported Senate Bill 599.

Introduction

- Mr. Carl S. DeMatteo, Director of Local Affairs for Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.
 - 1) Temporary representative to cover wildlife issues.
 - 2) Currently, looking for a replacement.

Finalize Selections of 2002-2003 Waterfowl Hunting Seasons

- Presentation by Mr. Larry Hindman, Waterfowl Project Manager
- Summary of Comments for the Late Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits from the Public Meeting on August 19, 2002 [Attachment C].
- Summary of Online Comments for the Late Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits [Attachment D].
- 2002 Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits [Attachment E]
 - 1) Extension of the framework for duck season
 - 2) Canvasback season will be closed throughout the United States.
 - 3) Pintail breeding population declining, we will have 30-day season.
 - (a) Public comments expressed concern regarding the decline in population of Pintail and Scaup.
 - (b) Public recommended that Scaup remain at 3 daily bag limit.
 - (c) Sea Ducks: little or no comments.
 - 4) On the AP Canada Goose: the online comments forum was interested in a higher bag limit. The framework is 45-days and 1 goose per day. Maryland cannot offer anything more liberal than the federal framework. The public supported the 45-day season.
 - 5) Resident Canada Geese late season zone expanded to included all of Garrett, Allegany, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Washington County and portions of Anne Arundel, Prince Georges County, and Charles County. [Attachment E]
 - (a) Received support for this change.
 - (b) At the public meeting, a few hunters expressed concerns regarding the impacts of migrant stock. They did not support the Resident Canada Geese expansions into Charles County.
 - (c) Charles County Farm Bureau supported the zone expansion and liberalization of the Resident Canada Goose.
 - (d) DNR banding data supported that decision.
 - (e) DNR is comfortable with the 5-day bag limit.
 - (f) DNR will watch this closely and will make the modifications in the future, if needed.
 - 6) Atlantic Brant Season increased to 60-days. We received little and no comments.
 - 7) Greater Snow Goose Season similar to last year with 15-bird bag limit per day and no possession limit. USFWS will not approve the usage of electronic calls, and unplug shotguns for the Spring Conservation Hunt.
- Questions and Answers
 - 1) Commissioner Lamp asked why September 28th was chosen for the Youth Hunt. When we submitted the date for the Youth Hunt the early season regulation was already finalized. DNR tries to avoid having Youth Waterfowl Hunt Day during the time of the deer season to prevent contact with the other hunters.
 - 2) We can have it at a later date; in fact we prefer to have the Youth Hunt later. With the expansion of the duck season maybe we can offer a later date for next year.
- Motion

- 1) Commissioner Adams motioned to support DNR recommendations for the Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits.
 - (a) Commissioner Freeland seconded that motion.
 - (b) All in favor and the motion was adopted.

WHS Information & Education Program Report

- Presentation by Karina Blizzard, Associate Director
- Introduction of staff members [Attachment F]
 - 1) Ms. Marilyn Mause
 - 2) Ms. Linda Wiley
 - 3) Mr. Doug Wigfield
 - 4) Mr. Wade Henry
- Mission: Making sure that people are well informed on Wildlife and Heritage Service issues.
 - 1) We receive invaluable assistance from the field staff to help maintain public outreach and educational efforts.
 - (a) Game Program
 - (b) Administration Program
 - (c) Heritage Program
 - 2) We do have specific projects, however we are not regionalized.
 - (a) Wild Acres: Encourages and assists landowners to create wildlife habitat on their property. Ms. Marilyn Mause handles this project.
 - (b) Project Wild: An interdisciplinary conservation and education program emphasizing wildlife.
 - (c) Website: Designed to be similar to an online magazine. New things are updated to encourage people to visit and return for more visits. Ms. Linda Wiley handles the WHS site.
 - (d) Graphic Design and Layout: Provides graphic design and layout support for the unit. This includes the handling of flyers, signs, brochures, displays and teaching materials. The Hunting and Trapping Guide is a major project for our unit. This year we included advertisements in the hunting guide to offset the cost of production and we were able to reduce the cost by 60%. Mr. Wade Henry handles the graphic design and layout.
 - (e) Public Outreach Events: Coordinates and arrange outreach events, such as the State Fair. Mr. Doug Wigfield handles the public outreach events.
 - (i) Envirothon is a high school academic competition sponsored by the County Soil Conservation Districts.
 - (ii) Black Bear Conservation Program is a new outreach and education program. We generate funds to help landowners who suffered agricultural damage as a result of black bears.
 - (iii) Becoming an Outdoors Woman is an international program that encourages woman to learn about a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities in a casual and non-threatening environment.
 - (iv) We will handle new projects as they arise.
 - 3) We provide assistance throughout the Department.
- Questions and Answers
 - 1) Commissioner Adams asked if we had information on the usage of Project Wild within the classroom setting. We are anticipating a study. There is a graduate student from Canada who is currently doing a study in United States on how many classroom teachers are actually using Project Wild. Also, we have found that teachers from grades 3 and 4 use it and adopt it more to their curriculum.
 - 2) Commissioner Dollar asked if adding advertisements was a necessary process or a proactive strategy. We took a proactive process to help raise money to support other projects. The advertisements are an opportunity for everyone.
 - 3) Commissioner Lamp mentioned that the Junior Black Bear Stamp Day received great support in attendances and profits. They sold products other than stamps that helped the sales.

State Forest and Park Service Update

- No report

Natural Resources Police Update

- Presentation by Sergeant Richardson
- NRP August Monthly Report [Attachment G]
 - 1) Several boat accidents and drownings from Ocean City to Western Maryland.
 - 2) Enforcing new limits on hard crabs, increase to 5 ¼ inches.
 - 3) Officers continue to patrol Crofton Pond.
 - 4) In Charles County two subjects were charged for shooting Osprey and three Great Blue Herons.
 - 5) Allegany County officers attended the Maryland Black Bear Task Force meeting at Rocky Gap State Park.
 - 6) In Garrett County officers investigated a complaint of an antlered white-tailed deer that went on a rampage. It was necessary to dispatch the animal.
 - 7) Also, in Garrett County officers investigated a complaint of the possible poisoning of black bears in the area of Mayhew Inn Road. An investigation is continuing.

MSA Update

- No report

Maryland Farm Bureau Report

- Receiving calls about crop damage.

Old Business

- Non-Lethal Task Force
 - 1) Discussion on whether a subcommittee is needed for the Non-Lethal Task Force (NLTF) or asking for a seat on this Commission.
 - (a) Commissioner Adams recalls that the thinking was that we have other types of committees that report to the WAC, such as the Waterfowl Committee, etc. The previous commissioners were in favor of having a subcommittee for the NLTF. The question is how would we proceed or structure the NLTF Committee and who would be the members.
 - (b) Chairman Lambert was concerned about having representation from NLTF, when the NLTF is no longer an active group.
 - (c) Commissioner Adams reminded the Commission that the WAC meeting is opened to the public. Suggested that the Commission send invitations to other groups, welcoming them to attend the WAC meetings.
 - (d) Chairman Lambert added that we have a need for looking at urban wildlife management and the input that we receive will be valuable to the Commission.
 - (e) Commissioner Lamp mentioned that based on the October 17, 2001 minutes, the Commission decided to form a subcommittee for the NLTF. The NLTF Report provides policies and recommendations of things that need to be done. One of the NLTF policy recommendations is to establish a subcommittee on non-lethal methods. A subcommittee would serve as a conduit to move these recommendations ahead and the need to focus on urban wildlife issues.
 - (f) Discussion ensued regarding adding the NLTF as a subcommittee.
 - (g) The Commission decided to wait until Chairman Lambert and Commissioner Lamp gather information and present the information to the Commission; at that point the Commission will make a decision.
- WAC Minutes on the DNR Website
 - 1) Allow the public to give us input and in turn give the Commission comments from the public.
 - 2) One-way we can reach out to the broader public.
 - 3) We are open to and charged with developing ways to be more inclusive.
 - 4) We have been posting the public comments and regulation proposals online.
 - 5) The online public forum demonstrated that we take these comments very seriously.
- Motion
 - 1) Chairman Lambert asked if the Commission would like to see approved minutes on the website.
 - 2) Commissioner Freeland motioned that the approved minutes be posted on the DNR Website.
 - 3) Commissioner Lamp seconded that motion.
 - 4) All in favor say "I". The motion was carried.

- 5) Minutes on the website will start with the month of March 2002.

New Business

- Commissioner Adams handed out to the other Commissioners a draft document that was designed to help the Commission with presentation guidelines for DNR staff.
- Commissioner Adams also handed out operating guidelines for the WAC, which was approved by Secretary Griffin. Need to discuss whether the Commission wants to continue the same way or make changes. Send copies of guidelines to the members that are absent.
- Commissioner Lamp was concerned about the ABC News coverage on Mute Swans.
 - 1) Director Peditto mentioned that the news media condensed an 11-hour day with Larry Hindman, Bill Harvey and a variety of different people into a 15-minute interview.
 - 2) We demonstrated satellite transmitters that we affixed on the mute swans. Also, we provided some research from Cornell. We spent a lot of time showing both sides of the Mute Swan issue.
- Director Paul Peditto revealed that WHS has a new Associate Director Jonathan McKnight. Mr. McKnight will be handling the new program called Habitat Conservation. The group will be charged with overseeing the Departmental wide the following items:
 - 1) Exotic Invasive Species: identification on the portfolio for potential species and their potential impacts. Handled by Ms. Edith Thompson.
 - 2) Conservation Reserve Enhancement Programs (CREP): provide new field assistance. Handled by Josh Sandt.
 - 3) We will provide more detail as CREP unfolds.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

Attendance

Members:	T. Lambert, C. Dollar, G. Fratz, W. Freeland, M. King, J. Lamp, L. Adams, K. Jones
Guests:	R. Ferrari, C. DeMatteo
Staff:	B. Beyer, K. Blizzard, T. Broll, M. Mause, B. Harvey, W. Henry, L. Hindman, P. Jayne, B. King, S. Koehn, P. Peditto, S. Richardson, T. Spencer, D. Wigfield, L. Wiley
Absent:	R. Gregory, C. Garner